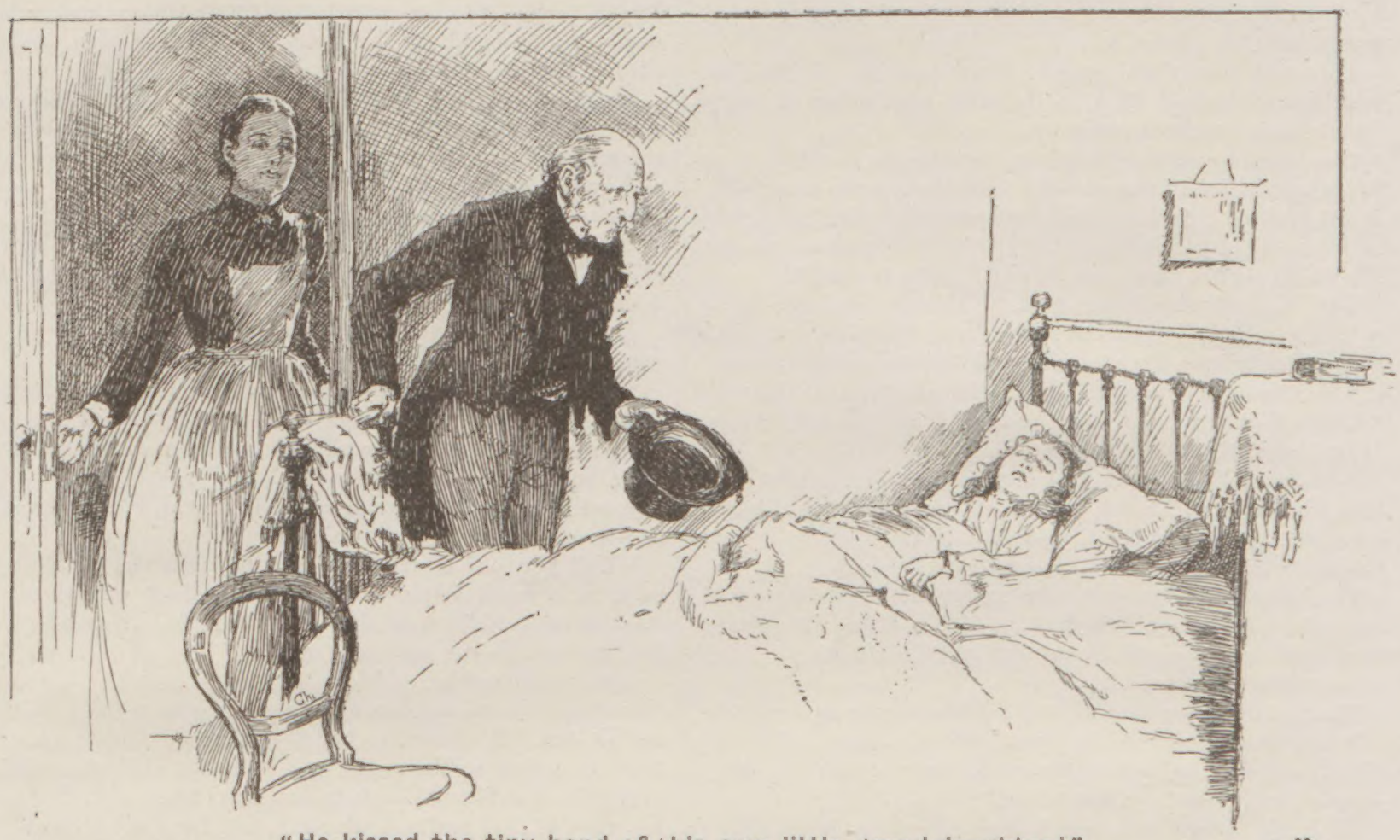
MARTIN REDFERN'S OATH.

BY ETHEL F. HEDDLE,

Author of "Marjorie Gordon: Heroine or Fanatic?" "Fifeshire Tales," "Cobweb's Promise," etc.



"He kissed the tiny hand of 'his own little grand-daughter.'" *p. 83.*

CHAPTER VIII.

A VERY DARK SHADOW IN PARADISE ROW.

Mr. Redfern was quite right. Dot was ill. Even Ella, who had tried to delude herself into thinking that it was only the effects of the long weeks of hot weather, could not but acknowledge that there was something more than this, and very soon her fears were too sadly realised. Dot's throat was sore, she was in a burning fever, and Ella and her husband, feeling as if, now that trouble and danger threatened their darling, all else had faded into insignificance, sent hastily for the doctor who had attended Robert through the rheumatic fever.

Dr. Dryford pronounced it scarlet fever at once, and he looked very grave as he felt the child's pulse, seeing how very little strength there was in Dot's frame to battle against a disorder like this; and, accustomed as he was to such scenes, his heart almost failed him as he turned towards Ella and gave his orders. Heaven help them, what were they to do? How gain the necessaries for an illness such as this, and if—even already it was only an if—she got over the fever, how provide all the nourishing food and medicine requisite? He went with both parents into the little parlour to write his prescription.

"Now, Mrs. Hilary," he said, as he gave it to Ella, "I am going to speak very plainly to you. I think the child is ill, that she will need careful nursing and watching, so you are to give your mind to that, and to nothing else. Remember little Dot is an old friend of mine. You are not to worry yourself about my bill as you did some time ago. That is all right, your husband shall paint Maudie for me, when he is well enough, and you must send for me whenever you want me."

Poor Ella! She thanked him tremulously, so did Robert, and then the doctor gave her husband his arm down the street, to the chemist's, while she went into the little room where her darling was lying—already so heavy-eyed and flushed, the little arms flung over the clothes, the fair hair tossed in confusion on the pillow.

"Muzzer, Dot is *so* firsty. Dot's froat is so sore."

That was the pathetic cry for days, and then even that ceased, and Dot wandered away into the land of unconsciousness, talking unceasingly in her sweet little voice, laughing sometimes a short, hoarse laugh, which went to her mother's heart, and once even trying to sing one of her nursery rhymes, till she stopped with a little, faint cry of pain.

"Tan't 'member, ole gen'leman."

The "ole gen'leman" came very often into her talk; her mother wondered sometimes at the hold he had taken upon her darling's mind. She would talk to him for hours, in her broken way, as well as to her mother, and as confidingly.

"The little tiny grey titten, muzzer. She is the ole gen'leman's, you know, only Dot plays with her, and the ole gen'leman has diven Dot a tollar for her. Pwetty wed tollar. The little titten are dead, muzzer; don't want 'nother. Dot will say, '*Tan't go a huntin' fear of little men.*' Fordet. 'Tan't go a-huntin'.' Fordet it, muzzer."

And so it went on through the weary days, till Ella's courage almost failed her. Dot was very, very ill. She could not look forward—to get through each day, that was all—and to keep her. God would never take their darling. Oh! surely not. And each day hope seemed less and less.

One hot afternoon Ella was lying, completely worn out,

asleep on the parlour sofa, and Robert had been watching by the unconscious child, when Mrs. Driver came to ask him to go to the chemist's. She could not leave the house, but would take his place.

He went slowly and heavily away, and Mrs. Driver had just settled herself in a comfortable seat, when a sharp knock made her start suddenly.

She went to answer it, giving vent to her feelings by an impatient "'Ush!" almost before she opened the door. Mr. Redfern stood before her, and she hastened to apologise; but he broke in impatiently, "Mrs. Driver, I only heard to-day. They told me the child was very ill. How is she?"

The landlady shook her head. "Indeed, sir, I can 'ardly say. Even tho' she gets hover the fever, she is so weak that we can 'ardly 'ope she can rally, and the fever is not hover."

"Hardly hope!" ejaculated the old man in great distress. "Little Dot! I have been away. I only heard to-day. How is she now?"

"Sleeping," Mrs. Driver whispered. "You might just look in and peep at her if you like." And then old Martin stepped softly across the little lobby, and she gently opened the door, and he saw the bed and the little sleeper.

How she had changed—the merry little girl who had crept into his heart. Such a wan, thin face; the pretty lips, half open, parched and dry; the little hands lying clenched on the coverlid.

He bent over her for a moment, his face grey and sorrowful, and then Mrs. Driver beckoned him away. "I'm so afraid she wakens," she whispered, "or her mother; she's sleepin', too, poor lady, next door."

If Ella's father had only looked through these folding doors. Only known it was his own little grand-daughter who was lying there in the fever's cruel grasp.

"I'll come again to-morrow," he said, as he stood in the lobby; "and, Mrs. Driver, if there is anything, ask them to get it for her. Say it is from the old gentleman she was so fond of," and then, with very trembling hands, he forced a bundle of notes upon her. "Don't let them spare anything," he whispered; "they *must* save the child." And then, before she could speak, he was gone, and was already speeding, as fast as he could, along the street.

That night, about midnight, Dot awoke from her long sleep. Ella, pale as her darling, and almost dreading to breathe, was bending over her, and Dot feebly tried to raise one little hand, though it fell back on the pillow inertly, as she looked up at her mother with the light of reason once more in her eyes.

"Muzzer," she said, faintly, and then she smiled, just a faint shadow of her merry smile; but Ella fell on her knees and buried her face in the pillow in an agony of thankfulness and joy such as only mothers can know.

Ah, she would live now. Surely, surely.

The doctor, too, seemed relieved when he looked in for a few moments after midnight, and he shook hands with Robert at the door very kindly. "I don't want to raise your hopes too far," he said, "the child is so fearfully weak; but the crisis is past, please God. There is good hope, with such wonderful nursing. No nursing like a mother's."

And then he went away.

"It will only be nourishment, and that of the best now," he thought, a little sadly, as he walked homewards. "I must tell them so; and yet, will they ever rear her? There seems to me about as little life in that child now as"—— And then his thoughts wandered off to another little child who had died of exhaustion after the fever that very day in the same street.

Dot's little feet had paused on the threshold over which the other child had passed. Would she wander over the Death portal, too, or return to those whose hearts she would surely break if she went from them—even to the City of Gold?

Next morning Ella woke from her short sleep, feeling as if some priceless thing had been given her. In a moment she remembered. Dot was better, and she had looked up and known her, and smiled. Oh, there was no richer, more grateful woman on earth than she that day!

But the tide of thankfulness flowed back over her heart, chilled by another cold wave of doubt and fear, when the doctor came in the forenoon.

He was a long time with Dot, and his face was very grave when he summoned Robert into the next room.

"I don't want to alarm you," he said, "but I don't like her looks so much this morning; and—I think—I fear she is a little weaker. You must send for something. I will tell you what things to get, and you must keep the beef-tea up all day. The fever is so treacherous; it is over, but it has left so little strength for her to battle with."

"Will you put down what will be necessary?" Robert said, in a hard, strained voice. "I will go out at once. Yes, thank you." And after the doctor had given him the list, he took his hat and went out too.

Ella sat on in the parlour. She could see Dot through the folding doors, and her despairing eyes were fixed on the child's face. It seemed to her to be a shade whiter, a shade more wan than in the morning. Was the shadow creeping over it? Was the little life to ebb away after all? But not for want of food and nourishment; not for want of money!

"I shall write to my father again," she thought suddenly. "He cannot, he *dare not* refuse to help me when it is life or death." She took a sheet of paper and a pen, and then sat down, and with trembling fingers wrote the address at the old Hall.

She had hardly begun when Mrs. Driver came in. "What does the doctor say to-day?" she asked.

Ella turned round and dropped her pen.

"He hardly dare tell us, I think, what he fears," she said, in low, unsteady tones; "she was better, you know, but she is so weak—there is so little strength left. He has given orders she is to have expensive food, and fruit and beef-tea! We are almost penniless, and we owe you money, and some others! The shop people will not trust us! What are we to do? My brain seems turning! Are we to lose our child for want of money? Oh, I shall go mad! Dot, Dot, you *shall not* die!"

Mrs. Driver's eyes were full of tears, but she advanced hastily with a packet in one hand, and she held it before poor Ella's dazed, despairing eyes. "No, indeed, dear lady, she shall not! Look what the old gentleman left for just sich things, yesterday, when he was here! And just to say it was from the old gentleman who was so fond of her."

Ella caught hold of the notes, pulling them wildly asunder. Two were for five and one for ten pounds. It seemed a message from heaven!

She burst into a flood of tears. "Oh, yes, it will save her; she shall have all he said! Mrs. Driver, you will run round at once to the butcher's, and to Blake's. My darling! Oh, if I could see the old man to thank and bless him! The doctor did not despair if she could have all he ordered." And after pushing a note into the old woman's hand, poor Ella slipped again to her darling's side, to stroke the little hands and head, and to watch with her agonised gaze every change and expression in the beloved little face.

Mrs. Driver had not been gone more than a few moments when a knock came to the door, and Ella went to answer it, Mrs. Driver's one handmaiden being kept downstairs for fear of infection. She opened the door, and an old man who was standing there with one hand full of flowers and the other grasping a bulky parcel, hardly looked at her before he asked eagerly, "How is she?"

Ella gasped and started, gave another quick look, and then sank back against the wall. Who was it? Who was standing there?

Mr. Redfern had hardly noticed her; and he came in now and walked into the little parlour, putting down the parcel as if unused to such burdens, and then he turned round. "How is she? Are you——"

Then—then—even as he met the recognition in her eyes, he knew who stood before him!

It was the daughter he had sworn never to see again; and his had been a wicked oath. He told himself that as he stood there, his hands trembling, his heart beating loud and fast against his side. He had sinned against Heaven; he was "worse than an infidel." Would God ever forgive him? Would she? And was that really Ella?

CHAPTER IX.

HIS OWN LITTLE GRAND-DAUGHTER.

THE Ella he had seen last, with her fair young face and softly-rounded figure, was very different from this wan, pale-faced woman, who stood there in her shabby, threadbare gown, against the background of the poor and shabby room! That, Ella! How was she here? It was the ghost of his daughter, worn, emaciated, weary, with sad lines around the sweet mouth, and a look of care in the beautiful eyes that was terrible to see! How *poor* she looked; how dreadfully, horribly poor! He would not have known her but for the eyes. And then another recollection flashed across him, and he started and took another eager step forward. "Dot!" he cried. "Is Dot your child? Are *you* her mother?"

"Yes," Ella answered. "Oh! father, are you the old gentleman she went to see, and was so fond of? And we never knew! Oh! this is God's hand; can we ever doubt His love again? He has brought you here. He will make you forgive me at last. He sent you your own little grand-daughter to bring you here!"

And then Ella suddenly burst into tears, and Martin Redfern, advancing tremulously, put his feeble old arms around her. Ella's face was hidden on his breast; his tears fell on her bent head, and in those tears all anger and pride and the bitterness of years flowed away for ever. "God forgive me," he said brokenly; "I sinned against Him, as well as against my own flesh and blood. Can you forgive me, Ella?"

Could she? Ah, he knew how fully when she looked up and sobbed her answer. There was no bitterness in Ella's heart; only peace, and gratitude unspeakable.

And then she led her father into the room where Dot was sleeping, and he kissed the tiny hand of his "own little grand-daughter"—Ella heard him whisper the words over to himself as they left the room again, as if they brought a new, unutterable delight.

When Robert came in there were, indeed, strange things to tell him. Mr. Redfern went over and wrung his hand when Ella had told him all. "I wronged you," he said, his grey head bent, and his tones trembling and low; "but she has forgiven me; you will, too, for her sake and the child's? And we will all begin again."

Poor Robert, worn and tired with his long useless walk, only knew that now his darling would have all the means possible to keep her with them. It was the only thing he could realise.

And as the days went on, the hope, faint at first, grew into a reality. She did not die; the little feet strayed back, the loving hands kept her with them. Gradually new life crept into Dot's dear face, strength returned to the little frame, and she could sit up and talk and smile in her own loving, merry way.

"You could not let her go," the kind doctor said smilingly to Ella, one day, when Dot was unusually well. "Ah, yes; such luxuries as these," pointing to a loaded table which the old man always kept covered with all his wealth could buy, "are great and good things; but a mother's nursing——! I think sometimes mothers hold the children back by sheer force of their love, and by God's mercy."

How happy they were! After the sadness and the dread of these last days, when little Dot had been almost within the shadow, it is pleasant to write now of the sunshine which followed!

To be getting better, and to have them all with her—father, mother, and her "ole gen'leman," and not forgetting a dear grey kitten and a new and magnificent Lolla!

It was a very happy world to Dot, and such a rich world!

Now that the old man had found his daughter, and taken her again to his heart, he tried very hard to atone for all the past. He took them away from Paradise Row immediately, though Mrs. Driver was by no means forgotten, and he settled upon Ella the fortune that would have been hers had she married Mark.

Robert realised his dream at last, and all four went down to the seaside in the late autumn. They could never separate again; her grandfather could not live without Dot.

And then the fresh breezes, the blue sea, above all the elixir of hope, did indeed as he had dreamt, give Robert back life and strength, and Dot grew rosy, too, and Ella's face had almost its old, soft colouring. And then when the winter had fairly begun, they returned to Hillsthorpe, where Mrs. Leslie bade fair to spoil the little one, and seemed to grow young again with joy over her young lady's return.

Ella never again took Dot from her father's side. No one, not even she, had the influence over him that Dot possessed. There was no one like her in the world, he said. He "would not have the winds of heaven visit her too roughly." He grew very feeble, but he was never too feeble to take the child on his knee at night, and there Dot sat till her mother carried her to bed. And then she said her little prayers, praying God to bless dear grandfather last of all; she was never happier than when with him.

He died a year later, very quietly in his chair one night after Robert had carried Dot off to bed. Ella had looked up to find his eyes fixed on her face, and she was struck by their wistful look. "What is it, dear father?"

"Never tell her—that I sent you away like that," he said, faintly; "I am sorry, Ella, very, very sorry! And God will forgive me. He forgives us if we are sorry, my dear, even if we were very hard and cruel. I never served Him in my long life, and He showed me my sin and my folly, and yet He gave me little Dot. When she talked of the good Lord Jesus in her childish way, the truth seemed all to come to me; I had never served Him, but He will forgive me."

"Dear father, yes!"

"And you'll never tell her? I'd like her always to love me—little Dot!"

Ella kissed the feeble, fluttering hand that was outstretched to her, and then, not liking his look, she went to get her husband. But when they came to him the grey old head had slipped back, the eyes were closed. He was dead.

* * * * * *

Mark Redfern's feelings when he heard of Ella's return may be better imagined than described, and his worst fears were realised. The Hall was his, but at Mr. Redfern-Fairlie's death all his large fortune went to his daughter. Mark had nothing but the Hall. He thought himself a bitterly ill-used individual.

From his wife he got no sympathy. She was honestly delighted when she found that Mark's cousin was the pale-faced woman she had befriended, and she annoyed her husband by her open delight and the announcement that she meant to be "great friends" with Mrs. Hilary.

"What more do you want?" she would demand. "You have the Hall. Isn't it right and proper that the poor girl should have her own father's money? After all these years, too! I like them all, and I'm as glad as I can be that the old man relented."

There was no use, as he had often said, in arguing with her, and sneers only glided off Mrs. Mark Redfern's perceptions.

He was "out of humour," he must be bilious. She would really recommend a course of Smithson's fruit salt.

And as she looked at him with the calmest pity and good nature, Mark Redfern for once was speechless. Who could wither a woman like that by the most biting sarcasm? A woman who recommended him to take fruit salt as a remedy for just anger and resentment.

"You have not a grain of common-sense about you," he said, "nor of worldly wisdom! I give you up. You can go your own way."

And—"Thank you," Mrs. Mark said. "You think it's a bad world, Mark, and I think it's a good one, and that we get better than we deserve! That's my experience. Come along, Lily, and we'll go out and see Dot and her mother. You can play with the darling, and I'll talk to Ella. She's the sweetest soul in the world, and she helps me to be a better woman."

And at that, Mark Redfern shut the door.

THE END.

KITH AND KIN IN THE OUTER CIRCLE.

BY SARAH TYTLER.

The Mother-in-law, the Husband's Mother.

"THE mother-in-law!" How familiar the word is in English literature, and how vexed one is to think that by the mere misunderstanding of a witty writer's deliberately extravagant attacks, the term has become a by-word for scoffs and sneers, instead of a name of honour full of all generous and kindly associations! I can only remember one instance in which there was a half-grave, half-laughing, wholly manly attempt, in the pages of a well-known magazine, to vindicate the mother-in-law from the gay, sweeping charges of Mr. Thackeray and his followers, and to represent the blessing she was in many, probably in the majority, of households. Nevertheless, the light badinage has made a mark which it was never intended to make, and left a soreness behind, until men and women, loving and loyal to their own mothers, have been tempted to hope that these cherished mothers may never fill the position of mothers-in-law—never be exposed to the flippant mockery and odium, the positive distrust with which the relationship is regarded by narrow and jealous minds, wrought upon by the ridicule and censure which the thoughtless and cynical have liberally heaped upon it.

Another sort of mother-in-law than that caricatured unmercifully in our lighter literature, lived and clothed the character with undying dignity and tenderness ages ago. She was known to her own people long before Michael Angelo Titmarsh, the big, gentle genius, who, like the philosopher's dog Diamond, little knew the mischief he was doing, uttered the merry quips and cranks, and was followed by the comparatively small fry of his blind imitators, who have rung the changes on his jests till they have grown stale, flat, and unprofitable. This mother-in-law of the early ages was clung to as faithfully and trusted as entirely by her daughter-in-law, a woman of another and an alien race, as ever son or daughter whom Naomi had borne could have loved her, and stood by her in her desolation.

All mothers-in-law are not like this grand, large-hearted mother-in-law of old, but neither are they all, no, nor half, nor quarter of them, the grudging, cunning, self-seeking women who have become a by-word to the modern world.

It is mostly from men's report that mothers-in-law have been brought, in jest or earnest, into bad repute. It is not the less true that the earlier stages of acquaintance between the contending factions are much more favourable to creating and nourishing friendship and affection where the future mother-in-law and son-in-law are concerned, than the first dawning perception of a wife and daughter-in-law about to enter on the scene is conducive to an incipient attachment between the prospective daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. Very few mothers have objections to their daughters marrying. Everything is in favour of it; the comparative helplessness and dependence of women, which cause their friends to desire for them natural protectors; the time-out-of-mind verdict of society, which assigns to the married woman, even when she is childless, a dignity and an importance which it denies to the unmarried woman—unless in extraordinary circumstances; the impressionable, emotional natures of women themselves, which, in the case of wives and mothers—especially of happy wives and mothers—lead them to crave for their daughters the highest success which can befall them, the love of husband and child, which in every true woman's eyes bulks far beyond all worldly possessions. There are rarely selfish motives to interfere with a mother's willingness to let her daughters fulfil their destinies, or, if selfish feelings exist, they are refined in the essence, and intimately blended with the generous tenderness which, while it yields the first place in the hearts of her darlings, and gives them up to others with a pang, is still ready to stand aside, to spend and

be spent to the last gasp for the good of the children.

But while many women wish and rejoice to see their daughters married, very few women have any ardent desire to see their sons furnished with wives—far from it; women are wont to behave as if they put entire credence in that homely old proverb—

"My son is my son till he takes him a wife,
My daughter's my daughter all the days of her life."

They are bent on warding off the evil day. If any effort of theirs will be of avail, they are tempted to scheme and manœuvre to keep their sons unattached and disengaged to the last moment, though the mothers hardly look forward to seeing the sons forlorn old bachelors. The mothers are not likely in the course of nature to see it, so they wilfully shut their eyes and say, "After us the deluge," so far as the future fortunes of their sons are in question. I am bound to say that this selfishness is often complex and complicated, apart from the peculiar jealousy which women are said to entertain for each other. Very few mothers and daughters are dependent for their worldly well-being, their very living, on daughters and sisters. But very many mothers and sisters are dependent for their comfort and maintenance on sons and brothers — a truth which should supply another argument to women, if they would keep their motives pure and their natures single-hearted, to do what they can to help themselves, to prevent themselves becoming a drag, and a burden even, on the most dutiful and amiable of sons and brothers.

"Become to them as mothers indeed." p. 86.

It is too often true that the future mother-in-law looks on a girl with dislike and suspicion from the moment that the elder woman has grounds for believing that the younger has caught her son's fancy and won his heart. The more the mother loves her son, the less she likes to part with him, the greater disinclination she feels to share his affection or his worldly goods with another. For to many a mother the marriage of her son means her deposition from her place at the head of his household, her being transferred to a narrower, humbler sphere, with the curtailment of her comforts and enjoyments. Therefore she regards the enemy who threatens to do her so much harm with jaundiced eyes. The mother finds fault with the girl, sneers at her, snubs her, and if the elder woman is not too honourable to use unwarrantable language, slanders her, till by the time the bone of contention is publicly engaged or actually married to her son, his mother is ashamed to look him or his wife in the face. The daughter-in-law may be magnanimous. She may feel that she has gained the victory, and that therefore she can afford to forget and forgive, but frequently the mother-in-law will not forget and forgive. It is the consciousness of the error which she has committed, rather than the fact that the audacious and interfering stranger — as the mother has persisted in considering the coming mistress of her son's house—has become the indisputable queen of that kingdom, which makes and preserves a constant sense of restraint between the two. They may have dropped all outward signs of hostility according to the usages of society, and out of respect for the man who is the link between them, who is often sorely puzzled to adjust their conflicting claims. The women may be studiously polite if they belong to the politer sections of society, but they are never really friendly. The mother-in-law is not at home in her daughter-in-law's house as she is in the house of her married daughter, in spite of her son-in-law. The very children who unite the pair in blood, though they may be loved for themselves, in place of drawing their grandmother and mother nearer together, are, times without number, so many fresh sources of worry and blame. If any-

thing goes wrong with the family, or with the management of the house, or with the master of the house in his own person, it is all the fault of the daughter-in-law in the mother-in-law's prejudiced eyes. If poor Tom or George had married anyone else it would all have been different. The children would not have been sickly or spoilt; the servants would not have been wasteful or saucy; the bread-winner's income would not have been so heinously mis-spent, he would have stayed more in his own house in the evenings, he would not have been so fond of speculation or amusement. The whole situation would have been altered.

So the carping goes on, and is very well understood by the woman carped at, though it may be unspoken, or only expressed in innuendoes. The breach widens, the alienation grows hopeless until it is the mother, and not the daughter-in-law, who is a stranger and an intruder under the son's roof.

It is unnecessary to say that it is not always so. There are reasonable and large-hearted women who welcome their sons' wives kindly and generously, strive to see their good qualities, love them for the sake of the sons, throw over the daughters-in-law the shield of the sons' love for them, and delight in them, do not grudge them their due, whatever the cost, become to them as mothers indeed, even as the daughters-in-law grow into daughters in affection. The old story of Naomi and Ruth is a living record to the better side of human nature in the relationship. If women and mothers would do themselves justice, would falsify the proverb which I have quoted, if they would retain their sons not just till they take wives, but for ever, let the mothers have big enough, wise enough hearts and brains to anticipate what ought to be a foregone conclusion, to cultivate the sons' wives, both before and after marriage, to take them into the truest and most tender recesses of the mothers' hearts.

A MODERN MEPHISTOPHELES.

By the Author of "We Wives," etc.

WHICH of us has not, at some time or other, revelled in the wonderful imagery of Goëthe's "Faust"? Spellbound, maybe, by the exquisite purity of Margaret, or awed at the Satanic "Hah! hah! hah!" of the Lord of Evil? Even those to whom Dr. Faustos is unknown, have followed Elsie's devoted course in "The Golden Legend," and prayed with the bells in Strasburg belfry that Mephisto might not conquer.

Surely we have acknowledged the spell laid upon the two maidens—both so German, with their blue girdles and plaits of yellow hair—and shuddered as we thought of the prince of the power of the air, with whom they had to fight.

Yet, methinks, there is a modern Mephistopheles ready at hand. Especially in this nineteenth century of ours. He tyrannizes over men and women. He enthralls young men and maidens. He entices the brave and the fair. He is met with everywhere. In the drawing-rooms of Belgravia; in the villas of Kensington; in the back streets of the East End; in the boudoirs of Mayfair.

This modern Mephistopheles is custom. He rides rough-shod over the most abject of his slaves, or flaunts a rag of opinion before those who dread his chain. The most immodest garment, the most hideous invention, have been donned and admired if they were only "the fashion."

The human form divine has had the waist compressed, the shoulders raised, the back rounded, the instep crippled—all because of fashion.

Now, I am not wishing to condemn fashion (or, to use another word, *custom*) as altogether a veil of Mephisto. Public opinion is often a healthy hedge beside our daily path. But I *do* condemn the blind, insensate giving up of our own judgment and feeling to the passing craze of a moment.

In other countries men (I speak generically) admire feet two inches long; hence, helpless babies undergo tortures to which the records of Inquisition trials are as nothing; or they like a flat nose, and mother hands swathe their infants' faces to produce this deformity; or they value long nails, and grow up useless drones instead of busy workers in the human hive; or they imagine that a long underlip is perfection, and so willingly run the chance of mortification, and load that member with poisonous copper ore.

"Senseless savages only," say you? But the Mephisto of *custom* is as busy with us as with them.

He makes us mummify our babies, and pierce our ears. He cripples our feet—which ought to be so beautiful—and strains the sinews of our ankles with an inch or two of wood. He uncovers the delicate forearm and bust, and thus lays the seeds of endless ill-health. He cases us in steel, and swathes our necks in fur. He sends out our children late at night, and decks them in muslin. He trots them about with bare red knees and gossamer socks. In fact, what does he *not* do? Everything in this England of ours is ruled by this modern Mephistopheles. We recognize the scarlet horns and hoofs in old prints, but we refuse to hear his sneering laugh in this present century. Am I making much ado about nothing? I scarcely think so. Listen to Prince Henry when dallying with a like fiend:—

> "No action, whether foul or fair,
> Is ever done, but it leaves somewhere
> A record, written by fingers ghostly
> As a blessing or a curse, and *mostly*
> *In the greatest weakness.*"

This bondage of ours in the matter of fashion is giving a heritage of enfeebled health, delicate frames, and benumbed brain to our posterity. Thus, though this may seem a "weak" matter, it will leave a curse.

But, apart from *dress*, fashion is acting the part of Mephisto. A worthy acquaintance is passed in the street because her costume is antiquated. A loving heart is given the cut direct because she has courage to stand to her own opinion and defy Mrs. Grundy. A genius is blighted because it bowed not down to the golden image set up in our particular plain of Dura. We may have some qualms of conscience in so acting. That old-fashioned friend may have stood by our bedside when everyone else found the invalid fretful and wearisome. That affectionate relation may have helped us—lame dogs as we often are—over a stile of unfortunate circum-

stances. The glow of that genius may have warmed and brightened our hearth in dull days. But—"nobody knows them," and the cloven foot is so hidden beneath the robe of custom, that we follow the pitiful herd to do evil.

Then the mother who denies her daughter rest of body and leisure of spirit, but hurries her from one entertainment to another because "everyone will be there," is doubtless listening to the blandishments of Lucifer. The anxious guardian who urges the willing student up the hill of knowledge, heedless of health or brain, is sounding another note in the gamut of custom. The weary nerves, the aching head, cry out against this refinement of cruelty.

I think the Minnesinger of the twelfth century might re-chant the refrain put into Diavolo's mouth, even in modern London:

"I have more martyrs in your walls
Than God has."

Aye! boy martyrs, urged on to compete for fashionable professions; girl martyrs, tied to the stake of custom. All, all, because this modern Mephistopheles has transformed himself into an angel of light.

GLIMPSES OF SEVERAL MOTHERS.

BY EDITH C. KENYON.

(Continued from page 71.)

THE influence of Sir Walter Scott's mother upon her son's highly imaginative mind can plainly be traced, and the lives of mother and son wherever they are interwoven read like a beautiful poem.

It was in the spring of 1758 that the daughter of a distinguished professor of medicine in the University of Edinburgh, named Rutherford, was married to Walter Scott, a writer to the Signet (or lawyer) in large practice in that city. Mr. Oldcastle, in an interesting sketch of the mother and son, says:

"It does not appear that old Walter Scott sought for beauty of person in his bride, though no doubt the face he loved was more beautiful to him than that of the bonniest belle in Scotland; but beauty of mind and disposition she certainly had. Of her father it is told that when in practice as a physician he never gave a prescription without silently invoking on it the blessing of Heaven, and the piety which dictated the custom had been inherited by his daughter. Her education also had been an excellent one—giving besides a good general grounding or acquaintance with literature, and not neglecting 'the more homely duties of the needle and the account-book.'"

And then the same writer goes on to say that her manners—an important and too often neglected factor in a mother's influence over her children—were finished and elegant, though intolerably stiff in some respects when compared with the manners and habits of to-day. Mrs. Scott could say in her seventy-ninth year that she had never allowed her shoulders to touch the back of her chair.

As Walter was a younger son where there were several, he could not, of course, have all his mother's attention, but still she seemed determined to give him an especial care, for when speaking of his early boyhood he tells us, "I found much consolation in the partiality of my mother," adding that she had both a happy temper of mind and a strong inclination to study poetry and works of imagination. Like the mothers of the Ettrick Shepherd and of Burns, she repeated to her son the traditionary ballads she had learnt by heart in younger days. He, for his part, read aloud to her in his leisure hours Pope's translation of Homer; and some of Allan Ramsay's songs were the first poetry he became familiar with in this way.

Solicitous as the mother was about her darling's spiritual as well as intellectual welfare, the choice of books she should put into his hand must often have perplexed her, for she was wise enough to know that the reading he pored over with such delight would greatly influence his character. But her position was a peculiar one; she had been brought up in a strictly Puritanical way, and her husband was even more ascetically Puritanical than herself; and yet her good common sense, and the wondrous instinct of a mother's love, showed her that wider views and more extended reading were better suited for her son. Perhaps, unlike the mother of Wellington, who thought her Arthur was the dunce of the family, she foresaw that there was the making of a great man in young Walter, and that *his* mind needed different food from that which satisfied her other children. But, however that might be, events have shown that the mother acted rightly. Mr. Oldcastle says, "Her courage was, however, tempered with a wise discretion; and when he read to her she was wont, he says, to make him pause upon those passages which expressed generous and worthy sentiments—a most happy method of education, and a most effective one in the case of an impressionable boy." But a little later he was put under the care of a tutor who was not so wise as his mother.

Sir Walter tells the story in his autobiography thus:—

"My tutor thought it almost a sin to open a profane play or poem, and my mother had no longer the opportunity to hear me read poetry as formerly. I found, however, in her dressing-room, where I slept at one time, some odd volumes of Shakespeare; nor can I easily forget the rapture with which I sat up in my shirt reading them by the light of a fire in her apartment until the bustle of the family rising from supper warned me that it was time to creep back to my bed, where I was supposed to have been safely deposited since nine o'clock."

How sad would it have been for Walter if he had found upon his mother's shelves other and less wholesome nourishment for his eager, thirsting mind! Mr. Oldcastle says, "It has been proudly said of Sir Walter as an author that he never forgot the sanctities of domestic love and social duty in all he wrote; and considering how much he did write, and how vast has been the influence of his work on mankind, we can hardly over-estimate the importance of the fact. Yet it might all have been wrecked by one little parental imprudence in the matter of books." But Mrs. Scott's bookshelves were laden with the volumes in the reading of which her own pure mind delighted, and so her boy came out of those hours of stolen reading substantially unharmed, for, though his tutor was so strict in forbidding the reading of plays and poetry, his mother had sanctioned their perusal; there-

fore he knew his fault was the comparatively light one of sitting up when he ought to be lying down.

The tutor's stern rule did not last long, and an illness brought Walter, now a student in Edinburgh College, once more under his mother's care. Then his bed was piled with works of imagination and with poems, and, guided doubtless by his mother's taste, of which he wrote gratefully in after years, "My mother had good natural taste and great feeling," he revelled for a time in the fountains of romance and poetry.

Speaking of his mother again, after her death, Sir Walter said, "She had a mind peculiarly well stored. If I have been able to do anything in painting the past times, it is very much from the studies with which she presented me."

Mrs. Scott was very charitable, habitually giving away at least a third of her income, and her charity, as well as her gift for story-telling, was inherited by her son. And he was not only charitable in material gifts to the poor, but in exceeding thoughtfulness in sparing the feelings of others, and behaving to them with kindness in every way.

Mrs. Scott must have regarded her Walter's early compositions with great tenderness, for we find she had preserved a copy of verses, written in boyish handwriting, until her death; the verses were folded in a paper on which was written, "My Walter's first lines." His successes must have given her great pleasure, for when speaking, late in life, to Dr. Davy about his brother, Sir Humphrey's, distinction, she said, "I hope, Dr. Davy, that your mother lived to see it; there must have been great pleasure in that to her."

Dearly did Sir Walter love and revere his mother; the first half-guinea fee he earned at the bar was spent in purchasing a silver taper-stand for her, and she kept it on her mantlepiece for many a year. When he fell in love with Miss Carpenter he wrote to consult his mother about it, and to beg her blessing upon their engagement. When his mother died, at a great age, her son was in attendance at her side; and, afterwards, procured a grave for her in a beautiful situation.

Thirteen years later Sir Walter too died; and when his executors opened his desk they found a number of treasures placed where he could easily see them every morning before beginning his work. There was the silver taper-stand which he had bought for his mother with his first earnings, and which she had valued so highly; and there were, too, some old-fashioned boxes which had garnished his mother's toilet-table when he had slept in her dressing-room when a boy, and also a row of small packets containing the hair of several of her children who had died before her, and other little odds and ends which he had valued for her sake.

The last present she had given him was an old Bible, the book she loved and valued most—and Sir Walter also loved it, for the mother and son were united by something firmer and more lasting than any merely personal or intellectual ties; theirs was Christian love, which, while uniting them together, bound them still closer to its source—the love of God.

"The plash of the fountain under the hanging woods of Wotton."

ROSE LEAVES.

It is a question if the smoke-dried dweller in town does not appreciate roses quite as much as, if not more than, his country cousin, who sees them every day, and all day long. But roses do not only bloom for country folk; Strephon wears his button-hole in "the Row," and Chloe has her bouquet and "chatelaine" of roses at Lady Twirlabout's party, and very pretty she looks, and so think many besides Strephon, who sent them.

Now who will say that to see fine roses on a dinner table in Mayfair, with an excellent dinner, and a charming neighbour beside one, is not a far pleasanter way of enjoying them, than to be dragged round some garden in the country, and told the names of the flowers, till, in a state of weary despair, "Stanley" gets mixed up in your mind with "King of the Niggers," and "Miss Fawcett" with the "Pride of Cambridge"? But what is in a name, indeed, for roses or anything else, as our bard remarked?

My own idea of enjoying roses in the country is to have for my own companion that maiden fair to see, whom Chaucer called sweet "*Idleness*"—to lie in a shady hammock with a pleasant book—one not too long, nor too short—not a three volume novel, and not a "shilling shocker," but a book, as Bacon says, "to be tasted," and swallowed slowly, bit by bit. Thus reading, and thinking, and smelling the roses, our mind floats off, like the gossamer threads we watch, to unknown depths of garden and greenwood.

"My lady sat in the rose garden,
'Build me,' I heard her say,
'A rampart of roses red and white,
To keep the world away.'"

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may."

Her ladyship gave an excellent order, and I would give the same if I could be sure that the rampart would be strong enough to keep out excursionists, extra posts, circulars, and too neighbourly dogs.

Idleness waves her wand, and we think of famous English gardens, and the famous men who loved them. First we see a terrace walk leading down to a water gate, through which glitters the silvery Thames; the hour is striking from the old square tower at Chelsea, and the owner of the garden and the low-lying, red brick Tudor House, in furred gown and square cap, is walking down the terrace, talking to his daughters, Margaret and Elizabeth, whilst Cicely, the third, is playing with the children on the grass plat by the sun-dial. Through the open windows of the house come the somewhat shrill tones of my Lady More, that "jolly master woman;" and the Thames glides gently along to the Tower, where it will

soon bear Thomas More, never to return, and whose July roses will outlive him. But the river fades away, and we are in a prim, square grass plat, set round with a stately hedge, and in an arbour of quickset, planted for shade, sits Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, noting down his ideas upon the making of a fair garden, with knots and pleasant conceits, to cheer the fair Ariana, and whose essay on the subject will bloom and flourish in the memories of his countrymen long after himself and his masters have left the scene of their triumphs and disappointments.

Then we see gentle John Evelyn, who sits and enjoys the quiet peace of his Surrey garden, and the plash of the fountain under the hanging beech woods of Wotton, far away from the turmoil of the Court and its Vanity Fair, "so soon all to be in the dust."

Then comes to mind the charming garden of Holland House, with its hedges of dark clipped yew, and borders of yellow Turk's cap lilies, showing out their gold against the sombre background, like the embroideries on the velvet coats and satin waistcoats and the flowered brocades of its owners of yore; but the periwig period seems further off here, where personal memories of the famous people of our own time are the first to be recalled. Alas! that so many of them are now only memories!

Then who does not know the country cottage garden? The wild hedge roses and the holly hedge which fence it from the high road? The trim, red-tiled path, edged with "old man," lavender, sweet pinks and pansies, and noble bushes of old damask and York and Lancaster roses? At the door, like Little Red Riding Hood, you had to "pull the bobbin" before the latch would fly up, and when you did enter the door, you found yourself in the village shop, with a mingled smell of cheese, tarred twine, red herrings, and newly-baked bread, the last accounting for the absence of the good dame, whose grandchild would ask you to please be seated till grandmother came, and would dust down with her pinafore an old black, oak-buffed stool, now behind the rough counter of the shop, but which had formerly held the proud position of clerk's seat in the old parish church hard by, before the days of its restoration, when it was turned out, together with some monuments and the carved oak doors of the Squire's pew.

The memorable roses of York and Lancaster, and the rose that Chaucer knew, cannot have been our old damask or cabbage roses, as they were not imported into England till a century later. And the badge of the rose is not English at all, but French, having been adopted by Edward I., from his mother's land of Provence.

There used to be a beautiful rose in old-fashioned gardens. Now, I suppose, it is grubbed up and thrown away by all modern gardeners, but I believe it to have been the original "Rosa Mundi" of our old florists, and its figure is to be seen in Maund's "Botanical Garden." The flower was single, of rich yellow-pink, with a deep golden heart, and the leaves were of the softest blue-green, like velvet, which caught and held the rain-drops. "The dew also like silver in shining upon the leaves" gives its portrait clearly. The shape of the new Japanese rose is something like the flower, but the leaf has not the soft delicacy of colour, nor of texture, and is coarse in comparison with my old friend.

But the sun is getting low, and it is time for victims to rheumatism to go indoors. We have had our day, let the young have theirs, and follow Herrick's pleasant advice:

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying,
And this same flower that blooms to-day
To-morrow may be dying."

"FLEUR DE LYS, GULES."

FOOD AND DRINK.

BY JOSEPHA CRANE,

Author of "The Art of Nursing," etc.

III.—FISH.

THOSE who are in the habit of eating meat constantly, would do well to have fish in its place more frequently than they do. As a matter of absolute fact, many people would be much better in health if they ate more fish and less meat.

On the other hand, some people have the idea that in fish are found certain elements which tend to renovate brain power, and to support those who are engaged in mental labour, better than anything else. Now this is proved medically to be a fallacy. Fish is most valuable to all brain workers, or those who lead very sedentary lives, only for the following reason: If meat is made the chief element in the diet, and an undue amount of fatty matters is taken, things are eaten which in the end obstruct the function of some organ because what is received into the system cannot be eliminated. Gout, or a bilious attack, often clears the system from the disturbing element, and systematic muscular exercise such as rowing, fencing, hard walking, etc., or mineral waters and various other remedies have the same effect, but these would not be required if the diet could be better regulated.

Fish, then, as we see, is most valuable to those who lead sedentary lives, and who are brain workers, and women who often are precluded from much active exercise. There are nutritive elements afforded by fish that supply an important part in bodily wants. There is only a moderate amount of flesh-forming material in fish, and the form in which it is present gives the digestive organs little to do. Fish as a matter of fact digests very quickly, and the more nourishing fish is that in which the fat is fairly diffused through it.

Fat in codfish is chiefly stored in the liver; and as the meat in consequence is very dry, oyster-sauce, which is most nutritious, is often eaten with it.

Payen gives the following statement regarding the quantities of fat in some fish:—

	Fat per cent.
Soles	0·248
Whiting	0·383
Conger-eel	5·021
Mackerel	6·758
Eels	23·861

Sprats, herrings, and pilchards also contain a good deal of fat, and fresh as well as salted herrings are a most valuable food, containing besides fat a good deal of nitrogen. In a dried herring you will get as much as forty grains of nitrogen, and in a fresh one about thirty grains.

Fish should always be fresh, as then it is digestive, and the firmness of the flesh is a proof of good condition.

Boiling is a very wholesome way of cooking fish, and broiling is also a desirable way of preparing it. But if you want to broil fish, your fire must be clear, you must have it quite free from smoke, you must be most careful how you turn the fish, and though you need not use butter you must have some good, sweet fat with which to cook it. Lard is not used in English cooking half as much as it might be, and it is a pity that this should be so, as the most perfect frying, broiling, etc., can be done with it. In France it is very greatly used. Lard, I may say, is the soft fat of the pig, in which the *olein* predominates over the *stearin* and *palmitin*. *Olein* is found in oils and solid fats; the more *olein* there is, the less solid is the fat. *Stearin* is the most abundant of all the solid component parts of fats. *Palmitin* receives its name from being abundantly contained in palm oil. *Palmitin* is very like *stearin*, but it has a lower melting point, and rather a different chemical composition. Frying fish is a very appetising way of cooking it, but it is apt to disagree with very delicate persons. The fried fish which we so often see—and smell—in London shops is very indigestible. The odour, which is indescribably unpleasant, tells the tale of burning and decomposition of the fat.

The flesh of some fish is red, and that of others white. Fish with white flesh is less stimulating and is easier to digest than the former. The following is the composition of white fish:—

Nitrogenous matter..	18·1
Fat	2·9
Saline matter	1·0
Water..	78·0
	100·0

Among the fish that have white flesh are the following:—

Whiting, haddock, cod, sole, turbot, brill, plaice, flounder.

Whiting has been called "the chicken of the fish tribe," and is most easily digested. It is delicate, tender, and particularly adapted for the food of invalids.

Haddock is very like whiting, but is firmer in texture, and has not so delicate a flavour. Neither is it so digestible.

Cod I have already alluded to, but I will quote the words of a well-known medical man about it:—

"The cod-fish is far from possessing the digestibility that is enjoyed by most other white fish. It varies in quality a great deal, but some of it is exceedingly hard, tough, stringy, or woolly, and indigestible. I believe it to be a more trying article of food to the stomach than is generally credited. When reputed to be in good condition or in season, the flesh, which is arranged in flakes, becomes opaque in boiling. The juice between the flakes also undergoes alteration, and produces a layer of white curdy matter, apparently consisting of coagulated albumen. When out of season, this white curdy matter is absent, and the flesh remains, after being boiled, semi-transparent and bluish. In this state it is evidently not so nourishing, but being more watery and soft, I believe it is more easy of digestion. Indeed, some few instances have fallen under my notice where eating what would be called cod-fish in a high state of perfection—that is cod-fish in a firm, flaky, and opaque state after being boiled—has been followed by an attack of indigestion."

Sole is a very nice fish with a delicate flavour, and it is so digestible that it rivals the whiting as a food for invalids.

Turbot is the next fish on our list, and it is one that is very highly thought of. It should be kept a little time before being dressed. It is very firm and rich, but not as digestible as sole, flounder and plaice.

Brill is not so much valued as turbot, but it is a very good fish.

Flounder, like plaice, is digestible; but both fish are rather insipid.

I do not think that fish is sufficiently used or appreciated as an article of food. Let me quote the words of Sir Henry Thompson about fish soups:—

"Nutritious and palatable soups may be made from fish, the cheaper sorts being available for stock, while the better sorts are applicable as garnish. When we possess an adequate, and therefore cheap supply—an event which, with the enormous resources of this country, can only be a question of time—valuable soups and stews of fish and of shell-fish will be available for the poorer classes, whose tastes only require educating in order to appreciate them, doubtless also a work of some little time. I need only to refer to oyster soups, to the much esteemed *bisques*, a term usually denoting highly-flavoured *purées* of crayfish, and to that delicious dish, *bouillabaise*, eaten in perfection at Marseilles, as among the most agreeable products of culinary art in this direction."

It may be as well to note *en passant* that the processes of smoking, salting, pickling, and drying fish, which are intended to preserve it, all lessen its digestibility, so that fish which has been treated in this way is not suited for delicate people with weak digestions.

No fish so closely resembles meat as salmon, both in appearance and in its sustaining properties. There is much fatty matter incorporated with the muscular fibres, and beneath the skin is found a layer of superficial fat.

Shell-fish are considered to be more indigestible and more likely to cause disturbance in the stomach than other kinds of animal food. We have all of us heard of serious cases of illness resulting from eating them, and, indeed, some people cannot eat them at all. The crustaceans which are most commonly eaten are lobster, crab, crawfish, shrimp and prawn.

Of Lobster, Crab and Crawfish there is little to remark. The flavour of the two former is very much alike, and it must be remembered that the flesh found in the claws of the crab is much more digestible than the soft part within the shell. Crawfish is more easily digested than lobster, and Shrimps and Prawns are less likely to quarrel with digestion than lobster and crab.

Oysters belong to the molluscous tribe, and they are found all along our coast. They are obtained by dredging, and then fattened in creeks along the shore.

Oysters can often be taken by very delicate people, and this is rather remarkable considering the usual way in which they are eaten, which is when raw and without mastication. Many people eat the whole animal, while others remove the fringe or beard. Cooked oysters are not considered digestible, and whether they are frittered, scallopped or stewed, they are merely coagulated and hardened.

Mussels are much eaten, and are usually cooked in their own liquor. There is a little, hard, dark-coloured mass belonging to mussels which is usually picked out, as it is supposed that it is injurious to eat it. However, this cannot be proved, as many people eat the whole mussel and do not suffer in consequence of having done so.

Dr. Pavy says: "Of all kinds of shell-fish most frequently found to exert deleterious effects the mussel stands pre-eminent. It is well known to the public that it is liable to act in this way. Sometimes all who partake of a prepared dish suffer, whilst at other times some may be affected, and others escape. Dr. Christison, in his work on 'Poisons,' refers to an instance which occurred at Leith in 1827, in which no fewer than thirty people were severely affected and two persons died. As in other cases, it has not been clearly ascertained to what the poisonous effects are attributable."

In concluding this paper, I will give a few recipes for using up cold fish, which to some of my readers may prove useful.

Put a little bit of butter and a little flour into a stew-pan, and when they are well mixed and melted, stir in enough milk to make white sauce; add pepper and salt, and when boiling lay in it the fish cut up small, and a hard-boiled egg, also chopped up. A very little anchovy sauce is a great improvement. Let this all simmer fast for a few minutes, but you must not allow it to boil.

If you wish to brown it strew some bread-crumbs on the top, and put the dish before the fire in what is usually called a Dutch oven, or else a little contrivance which you can arrange yourself as follows.

The cover of a tin biscuit box makes an excellent little oven for this purpose, and a second cover put standing up behind it acts as a reflector. If you try this plan you will find it answers admirably for keeping things warm. The above recipe for cold fish will be found very good, and you can thus use up many remnants, which simply "warmed up" are not appetising.

If you treat oysters in the same way, omitting the hard-boiled egg, you will find they make a very nice little dish.

KEDGEREE is another method for which there are many recipes. This one given me by a friend is, I think, the best.

Take one teaspoonful of boiled rice, one ounce of butter, one teaspoonful of mustard, a little curry powder, and two hard-boiled eggs. Pick any cold fish carefully from the bones, mix it well with the other ingredients and serve boiling hot. Vary the quantities according to the proportion of fish.

Canal of the Brasseurs, Antwerp.

MY BOOK OF SUNSHINE.

I OPEN its pages, and in a moment I am treading in by-gone footsteps, am living in the past, and realising again some of the happiest moments and days of my life. How can this be? It is simply this. The red-covered volume, having stamped on the outside "Holidays," is a kind of scrap-book, half-filled now with holiday papers, sketches, and poems. I begin to read, and the past rises up before me—days on the hills, among the woods, by the seashore. The choicest poetry of life is there; a big journey of upwards of 3,000 miles also lies recorded there, and many lesser journeys. Let me recall a few of these happy memories, for I find this habit the best antidote to the monotonous and sombre days of life, of which we have all our share.

Thackeray has said that to see with one's own eyes men and countries is better than reading all the books of travel in the world. Let us take the big journey first, a voyage round the coasts of Europe in a trading steamer. Distance, about 3,000 miles; time occupied, one month. The *James Wilkie*, of Grangemouth, has since gone to the bottom. She struck on a reef on the Norwegian coast, and the men were with difficulty saved by means of the rocket apparatus. This iron vessel, when I was in her, ploughed her way bravely across the North Sea. Even yet, in sleepless nights, I think I hear the vibration of the screw, and see the light-ships flaring over the dangerous parts of the Baltic. I hear the rhythmic beat of the engine, the waves thundering against the vessel's iron sides, or the melancholy fog-horn, sounding, sounding, when the night is dull.

As we sailed through the Sound, which stretched ahead like a broad, still river, the coasts of Sweden, dotted with trees and villages, could be distinctly seen. Near Elsinore we passed Kronberg Castle, with its fictitious memories of "Hamlet." Darkness was coming down as we passed the spires of Copenhagen. We skirted the island of Rügen, beloved of North Germans for bathing and curios, and made for Stralsund, our port of call. Its three immense brick churches, with mosque-like spires, give the town quite an Eastern appearance. The Nicolai Church, which is the largest, dates from the thirteenth century, and

Elsinore.

boasts of some beautiful carving, representing scenes in the life of Christ. No canopy of smoke hangs over the town, as wood is the common fuel; the houses are of wood and plaster, and very clean. It was an agreeable change, after tossing on the Baltic, to enter the public gardens, hear the band, and watch how the Stralsunders, young and old, could amuse themselves innocently; family groups here and there were sipping tea, coffee, wine, or beer under the trees, and all were in the best possible spirits. We took the chance while at Stralsund of making a railway journey to Berlin, and enjoyed the glimpses of German life at the railway stations, and in the beautiful capital.

Three days of sailing northwards, up the Gulf of Bothnia, found us lying in Hudiksvall Fiord, waiting for a cargo of wood for Ghent, in Belgium. Wood is the great article of export in summer. The pine trees, felled up the country, are floated down the river to the saw-mills, and prepared for export by being sawn up into battens of manageable size. The fiord, dotted here and there with islands, reminded us of Loch Lomond, in Scotland. We had five clear days in which to make explorations.

We wandered through apparently endless fir woods, gathered blaeberries, which abound in millions; admired the huge ant-hills; wondered at the boulder-strewn country, for it seemed to have rained boulders; took a railway journey as far as the railway went; visited a paper-mill, and saw fir logs ground into pulp and being made into brown paper. The scenery around Hudiksvall Fiord reminded us of Scotland, only, on most of the hills, the woods crept up to the very summit. It was pleasant to visit a real Swedish dairy in the woods, where the cow-houses were cleaner than many a cottage interior in Scotland, taste the milk and cheese, and hold impossible conversation with the dairymaids. Pleasant also an excursion in a steam-launch up and down the fiord. The mosquitoes were troublesome in July. The country houses are of wood, with a few feet of stone as a foundation. No carpets are to be seen, but all is singularly clean. The fire-places are brick hearths; sometimes you see stoves.

The return journey to Ghent was enlivened by a slight storm off the coast of Denmark. A gale from the south-west raised the sea, and made progress impossible. For two nights and a day the engines were kept going easy. But we had a narrow escape from having our deck cargo washed overboard. To stand on deck was impossible, and the motion of the ship was like a giant see-saw. There were many gaps in the wooden temporary paling on deck, now monopolised by wood, which made it possible that one might be shot into the sea. The second mate was emptied from a sofa upon the floor, and the contents of a locker began a journey across the cabin. We forgot all this when the wind abated, and when we made the dike-defended coast of Holland, sailed up the Scheldt, and entered the canal for Ghent. Here we were tempted with tobacco at from 10d. to 1s. 3d. per lb., and cigars from 4s. per 100. Ghent we did thoroughly, as well as Antwerp and the Exhibition there, but the gem of the whole journey was by rail to Brussels, and an afternoon spent on the field of Waterloo.

Holland and Belgium are vast industrial hives, sending us fruit, butter, butterine, cheese, eggs, vegetables, poultry, etc. Every available inch of Belgium and Holland seems cultivated, and has the appearance of one vast garden. Evidently Britain is regarded as a huge warehouse to which benevolent Dutchmen and Belgians may export these commodities of life.

The scene changes. We are in Penrith, on the way to the Isle of Man. We find ourselves wondering at the names on the shop signs in this clean, English town, climbing a hill, and visiting Brougham Castle. Next we have dropped into Keswick, which Mrs. Lynn Linton, herself a native, calls "the heart of the rose." We glance at Greta Hall, the residence of the laborious Southey, visit a pencil factory, and by mid-afternoon alight from the coach in Ambleside. Can anyone ever forget the first view of Grasmere Lake, that gem set amongst the mountains? Of course, we saw Rydal Mount and Wordsworth's grave, and some of the other scenes made notable by this poet, Coleridge, and De Quincey. Then after the railway journey to Barrow, and safely on board the steamer, we watched the mysterious isle dawn like a country in fairyland, out of the waste of waters. We have recollections of walks and railway journeys, and pleasant company at the boarding-house in Douglas, and a sail round the island, and altogether the remembrance of a good and happy time.

But other recollections crowd upon us. The top of Ben Lomond, with the mirror-like expanse of the Loch dotted with islands stretched below. It seems a foretaste of heaven. "Will there be lochs in heaven?" muttered Dr. Chalmers, when his eye rested on this fair scene. Next we are on Ben Lawers, 4,000 feet above the sea level, taking in the pleasant expanse of Loch Tay. Kenmore, that village at the east end of the loch, is as neat and clean as a village can be, and boasts of an unique tea and coffee room, with antique furniture, the whole planned by Lady Breadalbane.

Next I am seated in imagination, as I was in reality for two days, on a carrier's cart. Those who want a new and pleasant excitement might find it under these conditions. It is interesting to watch the cottagers surrounding the carrier's cart with butter or eggs to sell, getting in return all kinds of household commodities. We touch at farms, at lonely roadside cottages, and get in this way some insight into the style in which many country people live.

It is certainly a beneficent arrangement of Providence that these restful days are sandwiched, so to speak, between the working days of the year. We would get fevered otherwise, and work would not be so well done. For sleepless nights and working days, therefore, we can call up the freshness and restfulness of nature, as nothing is ever really forgotten, only something has come between us and the memory of what is past, and overlaid it. A hint or two therefore from the little volume I have mentioned is sufficient to revive a train of recollections. Once the recollection is revived, it is easy to admire the old prospects, talk with the old friends, and be refreshed by the grandeur and sublimity of the hills we have climbed. I recommend this simple recipe to all who wish to escape for a little from the monotony and conventionality of their everyday existence.

ROBERT COCHRANE.

"LEGITIMATE LAZINESS."

"The truants of life's weary school,
Without excuse from thrift,
We change, for once, the game of toil
For God's unpurchased gift."—WHITTIER.

"LAZINESS is de bery life of critturs," says an old negro in one of Mrs. Beecher Stowe's novels, and there was a great deal of wisdom in the old man's dictum. We know that laziness bears a bad name; the dictionary defines it as a habitual or natural slothfulness, but in its original sense it meant nothing quite so bad. It is derived from the Latin *lassus*, which means to be wearied, and is akin to lassitude —a state of inaction resulting from weariness. We do not mean, however, wholly to defend laziness, but to show that there are times when people may legitimately be as lazy as they please. Like some opiates, laziness, if used medicinally, heals and soothes; if taken without discretion as to manner and time, or in too large doses, it will harm the patient.

The word "laziness" assumes that a man leaves off working because he is wearied, though unfortunately this is not always the case; it then becomes his medicine, to be taken if he would not neglect nature's protest against overwork.

There are people who cannot be lazy, and there are people who simply will not be lazy; the latter we condemn, the former we can only pity. Business men, with large commercial enterprises resting upon them, can never quite shake off the business harness. If they go away for a "holiday" they dare not put themselves beyond communication with post, telegraph, or means of hearing city news; amongst mountain scenery or ocean breezes they cannot help thinking, planning, arranging, and "watching the money market." The busy mother will toil on, year in and year out, without the possibility of a day's holiday from the noise and bustle of the family. She may carry off her lads and lassies to the seaside for a month in the summer, but let any mother who has had a like experience answer if that is altogether a season of rest and quiet. It has been said that busy women do not know how to rest. If a man has a few leisure moments he throws himself into an arm-chair, and absolutely rests his body by inaction; a mother's idea of rest, when worn out with hurrying to and fro, is to snatch up some garment, or a tiny pair of socks to darn whilst she sits down for half an hour. To such, a fit of laziness which might lawfully be indulged, would be a real boon. These men and women to whom laziness is an unattainable luxury, generally die "in harness"; they live in their work and they die in it, perhaps echoing in their hearts the thought of one wearied old working woman, who wished that her epitaph might be "I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever."

There are some people who, with all facilities for it, will not be lazy, who, in fact, do not know how it is done. They wear themselves out with lawful and necessary work, and then of their holidays they form one long round of excitement, bustle, turmoil, hurrying to and fro, without rest or cessation. If they go abroad their one idea is to see as much as possible in the time they can give; if they go to the seaside, they must press into each day as much change as possible; if they go on a walking tour or a boating excursion, they think only of the extent of ground which can by the most strenuous exertions be covered. They make a toil of pleasure, and we are not surprised that they come back tired and jaded with the rest of their party, only too glad to drop back into the monotonous home or business life. Of all companions upon a summer holiday most to be avoided are these too-active, too-vigorous men or women, who know nothing of, care nothing for the health-giving properties, the actual rest and happiness to be found in a lazy holiday. They will not believe us that laziness is just the only medicine to cure the fever of excitement and unrest which drives them to the self-imposed labours of their bustling holidays; they urge that such a state of inaction and passivity would drive them mad, to which we answer, that is a symptom of the disease, not an excuse for further overstrain; try our remedy and you will feel less prone to madness than you ever were.

All other animals rest, and note how they rest—the horse stands lazily dozing in the shade of the trees; the cow loves to be perfectly quiet and inactive. We, animals of greater sensibility and even finer nervous fibre, must have our times of rest if we would meet the besetting sin of our day, "overstrain." Life has been called "a fitful fever," but there are many febrifuges for that heat of the blood—a firm determination to be wisely idle now and then, more intercourse with mother nature and green fields, "far from the madding crowd," which are within reach of nearly all of us. Wordsworth knew the world when he said that he grieved over nothing more than man's forgetfulness of nature.

"The world is too much with us; late and soon
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours. . . . . .
No grandeur now in Nature or in brook
Delights us."

We hear on all hands of men and women "breaking down.' Let it be our endeavour to be "timely wise," and, when nature warns us we have reached the limits of physical health, have a fit of laziness—honest, downright laziness.

ISABEL SUART ROBSON.

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

Fig. 15.

MANY of our readers will be making washing dresses this month, and will find a charming variety of pretty fabrics from which to select material for this purpose. Embroidered muslins will still hold their place, while zephyr and cambric of all shades and patterns will be very much worn. In making a washing dress it is always best to have a foundation under the skirt. These foundations are made into a sloped front, gores at the side, and a plain width at the back. When the foundation is intended for a washing dress it is best to make it and put the band on quite apart from the over-skirt, which should be set in another very narrow band, and can be tacked to the foundation, and separated when it is necessary to have it washed and ironed. Ladies, who have found how tiresome it is to wash and iron the foundation and over-skirt of a dress together, will appreciate this suggestion.

There is very little doubt that all the shadings of heliotrope will be pretty generally adopted, whilst cornflower blue, grey, green, apricot pink, and tomato colours are numbered amongst the season's novelties, and are received with general approval.

We give here two illustrations of fashionable dresses which can easily be made at home. Fig. 15 is made of grey striped cashmere with checked bordering of a darker shade. The skirt is three yards wide, laid in a few pleats on one side, and gathered at the back, thus forming the draped skirt. The sleeves and the under fronts fastened at the side of the bodice are of the striped material, whilst the back, sides, and upper fronts are of the bordering. The latter, crossed with bosom pleats, are brought to a point just below the waist line. Ten yards of single width material and three yards of bordering are sufficient for making this costume. A bonnet of the pale grey shade, trimmed with an apricot or tomato ribbon, will complete an extremely pretty toilet. This simple dress may also be made of plain or contrasting shades, which will be found a great assistance in renovating last summer's dresses. Heliotrope and gold form one of the new contrasts, whilst copper colour and gold-maize and apricot pink are being much used in combination. Fig. 16 shows a dress of muslin-delaine. Perhaps never before have so many dainty and pretty designs of this material been set before us, and little wonder is it that it is held in such high favour by young ladies. The one here illustrated has a cream ground with sprigs of heliotrope daisies. The plain skirt is made of the front and side breadths set plain into the band at the waist, the back widths being mounted in close gathers. The bodice lining is tight fitting, and hooked down the front; about three-eighths of stuff is allowed for the pleats on the fronts and back of the bodice. The fastening is hidden by a chemisette of the delaine, sewn down on one side, under the pleated material, and hooked over to the other, ornamented with rows of narrow heliotrope velvet, the same shade as the sprig. The deep shape basque is made of two pieces of material 12½ ins. long, and 21¼ ins. wide, lined with thin silk gathered at the upper edge and mounted on the edge of the bodice, which is then trimmed all round with the velvet. The sleeves, cut in the predominant high style, are trimmed at the outer seam from just beyond the elbow downwards with buttons and edged with the velvet; the low band collar having a band of velvet finishing with a bow on the left shoulder. Ten yards of delaine and nine yards of ribbon velvet for trimming is used for this dress; but a great many dresses similarly made have four or five rows of the velvet round the skirt, which is considered by many essential as a finish. Except for tea gowns the Medici collar has, with the approach of summer, been superseded by the low, straight band; whilst many dresses are neatly finished off without even this appendage, lace being tacked round the neck and falling to the shoulders, a pretty, cool style for young girls. Metallic gimps, passementeries, beads and studs will be much worn for dress trimmings this summer for older persons; whilst girdles will be worn by young and middle-aged ladies, the former wearing them round the basque and hanging with tassels to the bottom of the dress at the back, the latter having them fastened at the front or side. Never before in the recollection of most of us has there been such a variety and rage for capes, the variety making the choice the more difficult. Those considered most suitable for summer evening wear for young ladies and girls are made of fawn, maize, cream and white cloth or cashmere; whilst brocades and fancy-striped silks in black and dark shades will be worn by those of riper years, decorated with beaded gimps, fancy and plain braids, silk cord, chenille, passementerie or embroidery, which may be applied as elaborately as desired; but when handsome fabrics are made up, garniture will usually be sparingly used. A very becoming and effective cape is shown this season, made of white cloth braided in a bold design, some in gold, others in fawn-colour braid. The back is gracefully conformed to the figure by a curving centre seam and a belt ribbon tacked underneath.

Flat patterns can be supplied, 6½d. each. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

Fig. 16.